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failing noted above. So he proceeded to fashion some lettering that combined an absolute clearness with beauty, his mode of procedure, however, being simply to entrust his types to a firm of machine-printers, whose doings he supervised with fastidious care. But anon his friend, Lucien Pissarro, who collaborated with him in writing a treatise on typography, commenced using one of Ricketts' founts manually, producing with it artistic renderings of the books of *Job* and *Esther*; while having next designed some finely clear lettering himself, he started the Eragny Press. Thence he has issued what are unquestionably the loveliest achievements in modern hand-printing, each a great work of art, although tiny in size, perhaps the most exquisite of all of them being *Le Livre de Jade*, a collection of verses by Judith Gautier, daughter of Théophile, its pages illustrated by Pissarro's pencil. A daintiness, best described as Japanese, is the main trait of this master's fascinating bibelots.

There are two printers, however, who have resolutely opposed the ornate, these being Cobden-Sanderson at the Doves Press, and Miss Yeats at the Cuala. The former's title-pages show exceptionally fine skill in spacing, and the beauty of his text is of a singularly refined, dignified sort, his almost severe types being just such as a Greek sculptor can

be imagined liking. But on the other hand it is a charming homeliness, as of a picture by an old Dutch painter, which distinguishes the books wrought by Miss Yeats, whose wise taste for the simple is echoed in some degree by Ralph Straus, and by A. K. Sabin.

But another thing which markedly endears the modern hand-printers is the lofty aspiration they all represent. For compared to the expense of most branches of artistic creation, that entailed by typography is formidable; while though those who love volumes of beautiful form love them very much, such people are curiously few. And thus the artist conducting a press must make his art for its own sake, glad if it merely pays its outlay: he must be richly dowered with enthusiasm, possibly the greatest of gifts. Besides, painters and sculptors to-day are sadly inclined to hold aloof from the applied arts, and workers like Miss Yeats and Cobden-Sanderson, Pissarro and Guthrie, have emphasized that it is well for an artist to be an artificer too, beautifying things of use extraneous to ornamentation. Perhaps, then, the renaissance of typography by hand is destined to have momentous results: perhaps it is the herald of another 18th century, that wonderful time, when craftsmanship of all sorts was practised to finer purpose in Britain than ever before.

THE EASTERN RUG-MAKER

By MARGARET WALLACE ATKINS

THE rug maker like the poet is born, not made; but perhaps in a different sense, since all Easterns have been rug makers more or less of necessity, this industry being their sole income and their one method of self expression since back beyond history.

Many of the weavers were unlearned and unlettered in all save this art, which they acquired so early and with such exclusion and concentration that their eyes became trained to its intricacies and they did their color schemes from memory.

Until late years when the West added its demand to the already heavy call in the East, most of the work was done by women and children, while the men folk tended the flocks and tilled the fields; but when the Western method of hurry and exploitation reached them, the men and boys entered the commercial arena. So competition increased until it became a question of quantity not quality, and Eastern rug making had already closed its book of romance, its weaving and dreaming, and weaving in of dreams, before the hungry war god came to swallow the whole race in his ugly maw.

The East has a language the West does not easily understand—our philosophies, our moral codes, our habits, are leagues apart; but happily the sense of beauty transcends all these conventions, and we have met the East over its product of beautiful rugs,—our only real contact in all our efforts at approachment.

In his special industry, that is in the East, he commands our wonder, our admiration: nor is he of yesterday. Homer, Pliny, Horace, Scipio all knew him, and pictures of weavers at work are found in the earliest Egyptian tombs.

It was, and is yet in the East, the custom to hang priceless rugs on the graves of notables, and even to this day the tombs of Israel, Isaac and Jacob are not forgotten. This memory, this fidelity, would be impossible anywhere other than in the brooding East, where a thousand years count nothing; where time is verily a fiction, since they brood ever on the Eternal and the Imminence of God.

In the Western world where we are compact of materialism, this holds our imagination; we look wonderingly at him across the chasm that divides us and we buy his rugs. Dimly we know, for dimly only can we perceive him, that he lived close to the symbols of his religion, and that he worked with the true artistry of putting himself into what he created; in his colors and designs are woven his faiths, his hopes, his fears, and his sorrows.

From time immemorial rugs have represented riches and dowries in the East, and their value has been steadily growing: so it required no prophetic vision when some one, writing in 1903, warned the public to treasure their genuine specimens, as the end of the Eastern rug making as we had known it was well in sight. He meant only the menace of machinery and the destroying influence of competition and exploitation in an industry where leisure, beauty and romance were of its essentials.

At the beginning of the war, the trade journals made an outcry and some move was started to corner all the known genuine pieces, but things were again left to their own adjustment, and we can still with industry and a fortunate purse become collectors. Always valued for their beauty of coloring, now that the race of rug makers is

gone, and for a few generations, we will get none but machine-made duplicates—the value will attract those who find beauty only where the price is heavy.

The best silk rugs have always ranked high in decoration. They have been used to drape sofas and tables and many times have been given an important place on the wall with old Masters. It is one of the few consolations of the artist that his work endures.

With rugs, however, the separation of the sheep from the goats is even more difficult than in other branches of Art and requires fine discrimination. To know them in their various localities, their histories and symbols, is twice the life work of any one man, and to get one of pure ancestry is indeed a lucky find.

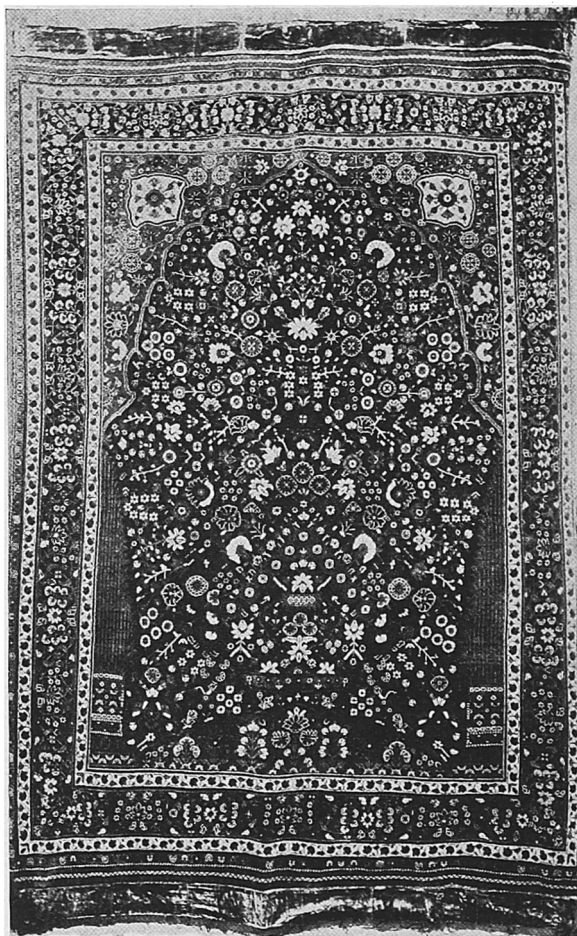
Perhaps when we have safely established our family trees and satisfied ourselves of the aristocracy of our pet dogs, we may next follow the gentle pastime of tracing our floor coverings to some remote period. This would mean the assistance of the expert who, if honest, must often be in doubt.

Ever since the communication between countries became easy and usual they have influenced each other, exchanging materials and designs. China has given Persia her cloud patterns, and Persia has influenced India. It is indeed difficult to find a carpet of unmixed ancestry: sometimes the color scheme is three parts Persian and one part Indian, when it was undoubtedly woven by a Persian as certain details of workmanship would prove.

Sometimes when the pattern breaks off—probably interrupted by the assassin's knife—it may be continued by the succeeding worker in quite another pattern; or, if a worker dies, the whole force engaged upon that carpet may, through superstitious dread, refuse to complete it, and an entire new force will have to be found. So the overseer or exploiter does not always find it easy to commercialise the dreaming East, or tie it to a certain production.

The industry reached Greece about 480 B. C. and was by the Saracens or early Arabians carried to Sicily, Italy and Spain.

To the Western mind the broad genesis turns on Indian, Persian, Turkestan and Smyrna rugs. This covers the knowledge of the inexpert, but the field is much larger. Persia and India are both large territories with varied climates, and a medley of races that is kaleidoscopic; their resources are



Courtesy of Kent Costikyan.

PERSIAN PRAYER RUG:
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

large, their creeds countless, and they, until late years, worked practically independent of each other. But the East ever wears the hall mark of the East, and to-day rugs do not differ greatly in material and design from the earliest specimens, although the Persians have made an effort to broaden and bolden their work.

In India the floral design prevails, and the orchid is the dominant note of decoration. Figures too of men and animals, with historic scenes and battle episodes, find place in India where the Persian or Saracen influence has been felt.

The eye of the expert looks at many signs; the material used, the quality of the wool, the weaving, the depth of the pile, the backing, the color combination, the kind of dye used, the warp and woof, the tying of the fringes, the symbolism, and last but not least, the number of knots to the square inch, this being as high as many thousand. This would seem enough detail,

but we have with our modern ingenuity added to the confusion by faking modern rugs. Sometimes they are treated with acids or ironed with hot irons, or buried in the earth for six months to be resurrected as antiques. It is about twenty years since a large English syndicate established itself in the East and set about putting the rug industry on a commercial basis as it is recognized in the West. The wages were raised from five to twenty cents a day and with this undreamed of wealth came change of habits and more or less travel. With more communication between the various races wools from different centres were exchanged, symbolism became mixed, and even sacred secrets of the dyes were whispered, until one rug skeptic, weary of the deceits and intricacies, that are greater intricacies when they have passed the Eastern mind, advised the buyer to purchase what pleased him, exercising, of course, ordinary discretion and care, and leave the rest to luck.

Yet with all this faking and baffling uncertainty, the rug industry has been our one commerce that is able to suggest to lovers of art a certain measure of poetry and romance. It is a record of a mysterious people whose civilization as it was, can never be reconstructed. It is an expression of their mysticism and their patience that was a part of their mysticism. It is the tribal writing of a people as ancient as any whom the imagination of man can retrieve from the past.